

Anthony D. Ruggiero RN, BSN, EMT-
Members of the Public Health Committee,

Please let this email serve as my conditional support for HB5542, so long as an amendment is made to add the fifth recommendation of the PSA Task Force to this bill. All of the recommendations made by the Task Force should be approved, not just some of them.

The first four recommendations are already included in this proposed bill and will clarify or improve current EMS regulations. The fifth recommendation would improve the PSA system and allow municipalities to have more control over public safety services of which they should be responsible for providing to their constituents, but yet is not included in this proposed bill. The fifth recommendation appears to have been removed due to lack of consensus of the Task Force. While there was not a complete consensus, there was a majority approval of the fifth recommendation. Looking at the members of the Task Force who voted against the fifth recommendation, most represented for-profit or non-profit private ambulance agencies that hold PSA licenses. The representative of the Hospital Association also voted against the fifth recommendation, and there are at least five large hospitals that partially own or operate ambulance agencies that hold PSA licenses for multiple communities across the state. Most of the municipality and fire-service representatives, including the representative of the Department of Public Health, were in favor of the fifth recommendation. Fire Departments that hold PSA licenses have just as much risk of losing their PSA's as the private companies if the fifth recommendation is added, but yet the Connecticut Fire Chief's Association and Connecticut State Firefighter's Association have publicly supported the PSA Task Force Recommendations in their entirety.

The fifth recommendation would give municipalities who wish to change services or to start their own municipal service the OPPORTUNITY to petition for the license to provide those services. Under the current and proposed legislation, municipalities would only be able to petition for these licenses if an emergency exists or a violation in a contract/EMS Plan. If all of the Task Force recommendations go into effect on October 1, it is not a guarantee that the current PSA holders would have their licenses revoked. The town or city would still have to petition for the change in service and face a DPH panel to prove why the new service would provide a better or more efficient service than what the current PSA holder provides.

Many towns are pleased with their current PSA holders and nothing would change come October 1. However, others are held hostage by an archaic system that gave control of public safety services to private entities rather than municipalities with taxpayer oversight. In my town of residence, for instance, the First Responder licenses are shared by the municipal-controlled Police and Fire Departments. The BLS Transport and Paramedic Intercept licenses are owned by a non-profit, private ambulance company. The town provides them a town-owned building to house their personnel and equipment for an extremely cheap leased fee, as well as use of the town fuel facility through Public Works for a reduced fee. When the non-profit, private

ambulance company needs new vehicles, they are paid for through taxpayer funds in the town's Capital Improvement budget. The town also provides some taxpayer funds to the ambulance company's operating budget. In return, the town is provided a great service by the company that staffs one ambulance 24/7/365 with two personnel, at least one being a Paramedic. However, the town has ZERO oversight of the ambulance's operations and personnel. The town is provided whatever level of services the COMPANY decides they wish to provide within the auspices of their license. The town has no say in how many ambulances are staffed or involvement in deciding mutual aid agreements. The revenue recovered through Medicare/Medicaid/Insurance billing goes directly to the non-profit, private ambulance company and not back into the town general fund, despite town taxpayer money being spent to maintain the operations and equipment of that company. I was once a volunteer EMT and then a per diem paid EMT and Paramedic for this company until I resigned upon being hired as a career Firefighter/Paramedic. I am pleased with the service the company provides to the townspeople, but concerned with the lack of control and oversight the town and taxpayers have over it's operations that vastly affect the safety of town residents, my family and self included.

I ask that the committee amend the proposed House Bill 5542 to include ALL recommendations of the PSA Task Force and approve it to be sent to be voted on by the House and Senate.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anthony D. Ruggiero RN, BSN, EMT-P
Career Fire Lieutenant/Paramedic, University of Connecticut Health Center Fire Department
Volunteer Fire Lieutenant, Windsor Locks Fire Department
Per Diem Staff Nurse, Hartford Hospital Emergency Department

**The above comments are my